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ABSTRACT

An action research project stresses the need to incorporate various methods of teaching to develop a firm reading foundation. Self-esteem also plays a crucial role in developing enthusiasm to learn. The targeted population consisted of first and second grade students in clustered classrooms in a growing, middle class community located in central Illinois. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes deficiency of skills evident from standardized testing, teacher documentation, recommendation by a team of educators, assessment that indicate student academic performance, lack of metacognitive skills, and lack of parent support. Analysis of probable cause data revealed the lack of multi-modalities being used within the classroom, deficiency in higher order thinking skills, lack of previous exposure to literature, and lack of active learning resulting in non-transference. Further analysis of overloaded curriculum outcomes and goals puts emphasis on quantity of skills covered rather than quality of methods used to display transference. An examination of possible solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with analysis of the problem setting, resulted in a four-step plan to alleviate the problem: examining, analyzing, incorporating, and assessing reading abilities from the targeted groups to form accurate information for further critique. Post intervention data indicated an increase in skills and use of critical thinking skills, an intrinsic motivation for learning, increasing amount of parental involvement, and awareness of self-evaluation. (Contains 27 references, one table, and four figures of data. Appendixes contain survey instruments, and materials related to student portfolios.) (RS)

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A READING FOUNDATION INCORPORATING MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE SELF-ESTEEM IN FIRST AND SECOND GRADE STUDENTS

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduated Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts In Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

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ABSTRACT

The following report stresses the need to incorporate various methods of teaching to develop a firm reading foundation. Self-esteem also plays a crucial role in developing enthusiasm to learn. The targeted population consist of 1st and 2nd grade students grouped in clustered classrooms in a growing, middle class community, located in central Illinois. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes deficiency of skills evident from standardized testing, teacher documentation, recommendation by a team of educators, assessments that indicate student academic performance, lack of metacogitive skills, and lack of parental support.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed the lack of multi-modalities being used within the classroom, deficiency in higher order thinking skills, lack of previous exposure to literature, and lack of active learning resulting in non-transference. Faculty reported students suffer due to strenuous relations involving parents and administrators. A lack of partnership among teacher, parent, and administrators creates unclear expectations. Further analysis of over-loaded curriculum outcomes and goals puts emphasis of quantity of skills covered rather than quality of methods used to display transference.

An examination of possible solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with analysis of the problem setting, resulted a four step plan to alleviate the problem. The process researchers will implement includes examining, analyzing, incorporating, and assessing reading abilities from the targeted groups to form accurate information for further critique.

Post intervention data indicated an increase in skills and use of critical thinking skills, an intrinsic motivation for learning, increasing amount of parental involvement, and awareness of self-evaluation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT....1
General Statement of the Problem....1
Immediate Problem Context....1
Surrounding Community....3
National Context of the Problem....4
CHAPTER 2 - PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION....7
Problem Evidence....7
Probable Causes....13
CHAPTER 3 - THE SOLUTION STRATEGY....15
Literature Review....15
Project Objectives and Processes....23
Project Action Plan....24
Methods of Assessment....26
CHAPTER 4 - PROJECT RESULTS....27
Historical Description of the Intervention....28
Presentation and Analysis of Results....32
Conclusions and Recommendations....37
References....41
Appendix A
Reading Survey....44
Appendix B
Parent Reading Survey....45

Appendix C

Child Introduction....47

Appendix D

Second Grade Checklist....48

Appendix E

Portfolio....50

Appendix F

Portfolio Contents....51

Appendix G

Portfolio Information....53

Appendix H

Portfolio Conference Schedule....54

Appendix I

Portfolio Conference Reflection....55

Appendix J

Portfolio Conference Selection....56

Appendix K

Portfolio Parent Reflection....57

Appendix L

Portfolio Self-Assessment....58

Appendix M

Portfolio Groupwork: Self-Assessment....59

Appendix N

Rate Your Feelings....60

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted first and second grade classrooms demonstrate a lack of a fundamental foundation in reading skills, which inhibits reading proficiency. Self-esteem and love of learning are also crucial to develop this foundation. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes deficiency of skills evident from standardized testing, teacher documentation, recommendation by a team of educators, assessments that indicate student academic performance, lack of metacognitive skills, and lack of parental support.

Immediate Problem Context

In the research that will be conducted, the targeted population will consist of primary students in self-contained clustered classrooms consisting of three first grade classrooms and one second grade classroom that will total a sample of 97 students. The sample will be selected from a single elementary school with an enrollment of approximately 588 students. Of these students 95.6% are white, .8% are African American, 2.7% are Hispanic, 1.0% are Asian. The school houses an Early Childhood Pre-school, a Physically Challenged Special Education classroom, a speech program, 4 kindergarten classrooms, which run in two session intervals, 9 first grade classrooms, 7 second grade classrooms, a Title 1 Program, a reading improvement program, a learning disability resource room, a

cross-categorical classroom, a Rainbow Program, and a Beary Unique program. The Rainbow program and Beary Unique progam are support groups set up to aide children with low self-esteem or children who may be having a difficult time adjusting to a divorce or death in the family. Social Services are also provided by the county cooperative system. The enrollments of the District had been increasing and concern for adequately housing these incoming pupils was a growing concern so the District reopened an elementary building which had been previously closed for the past 13 years. This allowed the District to have 3 separate buildings which incorporated students from kindergarten to 8th grade level. This site has grown technologically also. There is at least one computer located in each classroom as well as a state of the art computer lab containing 30 computers that allow students Internet access and up-to-date educational and technological advantages. In addition to technological advances within the school setting, lap top computers are available for extended use. All students are exposed to Art, Music, Library, and Physical Education classes taught by educators who are experts in their field.

The present reading program has been in existence for the past four years at the Kindergarten through 5th grade level. This reading series is an anthology of children's literature stories which offers many options for teaching concepts such as: family involvement activities, take home booklets, listing of optional trade books, multiple intelligence options, author/illustrator information, ideas for the integration of all curriculum areas, isolated approach of skills as well as a whole language approach for teaching reading skills. Opportunities for transference are in

abundance and there is a multitude of assessment opportunities. Individual teachers use this series in varying degrees as observed by the researchers of the study.

The Surrounding Community

The District is 17.59 square miles extending into two adjoining townships. There is considerable open space for continued residential growth. Much residential home construction has already been occurring over the past years. With current information on home construction within the school district, it would appear this growth will continue. Over the past 12 years the district has increased its enrollment by nearly 50%. More recently, however, there appears to be a more rapid growth in the district's enrollment. This closely ties in with the permits which have been issued in the city over recent years. Hospital live births figures have tied in closely with subsequent kindergarten enrollment. Studies reveal a continuous percentage of children moving into the school district. All signs point to the increase in school population.

Just recently, the Transportation Department began to purchase property for the right of way for a major interstate to extend. This route will pass directly through the school district and have two access points within the district. It should stimulate considerable activity in the housing market. The private and parochial schools are at or near capacity for their respective buildings. Consequently, the additional pupils who move into the area will need to be housed in the public schools.

The continued sale of homes by older residents will likely continue at about the same pace as is currently experienced. Some growth will occur with younger families buying these more affordable homes. The six year

projection takes the enrollment to nearly 1,800 pupils. This represents a 35% gain or about a 4% annual increase. These figures closely conform to what has already been occurring. However, this growth is happening more rapidly than expected. The district can anticipate it will reach more than 2,000 by the year 2004. The District has a maximum reasonable capacity to house approximately 1,800 elementary school children.

Socioeconomic indicators reveal that the averaged priced home in the combined townships is between $120,000 and $135,000. The upper price range of a home is $500,000 leaving the lower end price range at $120,000. Within the city limits there is a discrepancy with houses priced in the high range at $275,00 and the lower range at $80,000. Fluctuation in real estate is due to the rapid growth of the surrounding area. For a family who would rent a single family dwelling it would cost $1,000 monthly. To rent a two bedroom apartment would cost $600.00 monthly and to rent a one bedroom studio apartment would cost $450.00 monthly. The type of professions residing in this community have also seen a change from the blue collar worker to an evenly mixed group of blue collar professions and white collar professions. The District receives 59.4% of their taxes through residential homes, 3.04% of annual taxes through commercial properties, and 37.2% of their funding through industrial properties.

National Context of the Problem

Concern over developing a reading foundation which will enhance a positive self-esteem and create an enthusiasm for learning has been an issue in national and state classrooms for years. Students at the research site were grouped within clusters of academically at risked peers. The

clustering groups were then placed into heterogeneous classrooms. To help facilitate learning a Title 1 Reading Teacher aides in the adaptation and incorporation of curriculum and instruction with the classroom teacher. The philosophy of all concern parties feel that "poor readers can be taught to improve their comprehension skills utilizing the same self-questioning techniques that good readers use spontaneously"(Marzola, Eileen. 1989). Giving the students a state of awareness through multiple modalities will encourage the children lacking a solid reading foundation to develop an increasing enjoyment and comprehension by eliciting a flood of rich visual images(Rose, Laura. 1992).

Professionals in this field agree that addressing this issue will take ongoing and planned activities as well as teaching awareness throughout the school year. Three key issues that must be addressed are: Teachers must participate in examining and defining their philosophy and goals, and in selecting the teaching methods that will guide their efforts; teachers need to build familiarity with the research literature of the field, and teachers must be prepared to work in a variety of possible settings(Manzo, and Manzo v.,1995). Ongoing activities must include evaluating the progress of the individualized student by examining existing reading abilities through administration of standardized test. Parental involvement to indicate their child's past educational background and concerns with feedback on specific programs that create a learning atmosphere would assist in a solid foundation being formed.

Orabuchi, an educational researcher, has indicated that in order to establish a working relationship with students the student needs to be actively engaged in problem solving and thinking skills. This process must

allow both facilitator and learner to alternate roles to implement new ideas and enhance old ones through setting guidelines, expectations, and creating a learning atmosphere. Assessments that include students, parents, and teacher are very effective in monitoring the learning process. Other experts believe by utilizing these options within a metacognitive setting the reading and writing abilities of the learner will take an uphill swing. The goal of the learning process is to develop a student awareness of their individual learning needs. The teacher can facilitate a learning awareness by developing self analysis and reflective skills that will teach students to organize thoughts into a more meaningful manner to aide them in their learning. Opportunities to reach these goals need be present for everyone involved to be successful.

Obviously, there is no one best way to educate all children. We must discover areas of strength and characteristic approaches to learning. The facilitator must bring the teaching to where the child is. Howard Gardner, a Harvard psychologist and author of the book "Frames of Minds", clarifies the theory of multiple intelligence's by stressing that academics are not the sole measurement of intelligence. This theory has aided school staff members as they focus on personalizing their teaching approaches to harness students' full potentials. Teachers who want to foster a deeper understanding in their classrooms, must capture the learners attention through the use of different modalities. Then incorporating Gardner's 7 intelligence's becomes an advantage to each individual learner. If students are able to use knowledge in new ways, they are able to stretch their minds to reach their personal goals.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Through the collection of various forms of data, teachers have become concerned about the increasing number of students who demonstrate a lack of basic reading fundamentals. Students with a foundation that is not solid enough to maintain at grade level status was also noted. Data collection, as well as observation, has shown that too many students show deficits in reading mechanics and show little enthusiasm for the desire to learn. The concerned teachers utilized surveys to determine how the parents observed their own child's reading abilities. When researchers sent out 97 surveys to the guardians of the test group, a considerable number of replies received, supported a lack of experience with emergent literacy.

Table 1

Reading Readiness

Reading # 1	Yes	Sometimes	No
#2 Imagination	31	10	1
#5 Letter Recognition	33	8	1
#6 Picture Clues	29	11	2
#7 Recall Details	33	9	0
#10 Enjoyment	39	2	1

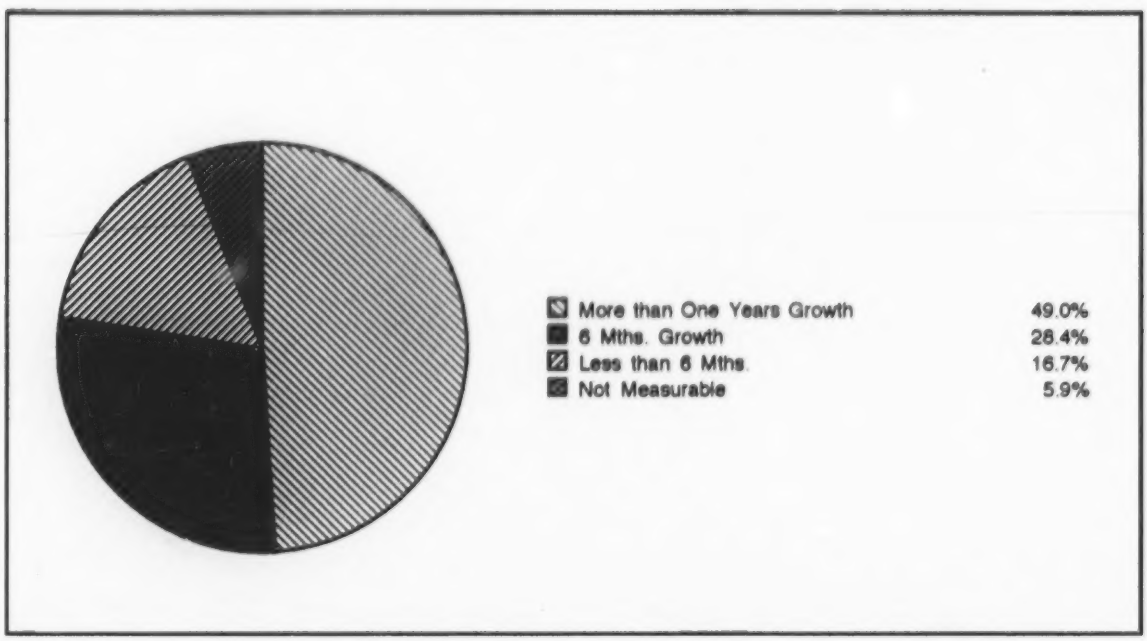
As shown in Figure 1 some of the concerns are imagination, enjoyment, reading mechanics, and prior knowledge. Parents expressed the importance for the primary grades to further develop in these areas. Parents recognized the need for further enrichment for the child's desire to strive for personal satisfaction. The type of satisfaction that will boost the individual child's self-esteem to become an intrinsic learner.

More evidence has been established through daily observation while working with the students in various settings . An overly increasing number of students have proven inadequate performances in the area of emergent literacy awareness. Developmentally appropriate areas are challenging even to the average student. Many students have difficulty with tracking printed text, letter/sound relationships, recalling simple information, simple sentence structure, and following basic two step directions. Problem solving is an issue within itself. Students have a difficult time transferring smaller concepts into a wider spectrum to see how they fit into the "big picture". It is apparent that motivation correlates with self-concept. The students who seemingly lack motivation are the same students who lack self-esteem seen through daily observation. Their academic performance suffers from this negative view of themselves, thus creating a cyclical effect.

Concerned with the above issues, researchers thought it beneficial to send home a second survey to the students' guardians. This survey concentrated on the child's overall exposure to literature. Below is a pie chart indicating the time spent reading for enjoyment with the child being actively involved.

Figure 1

Reading Emphasis



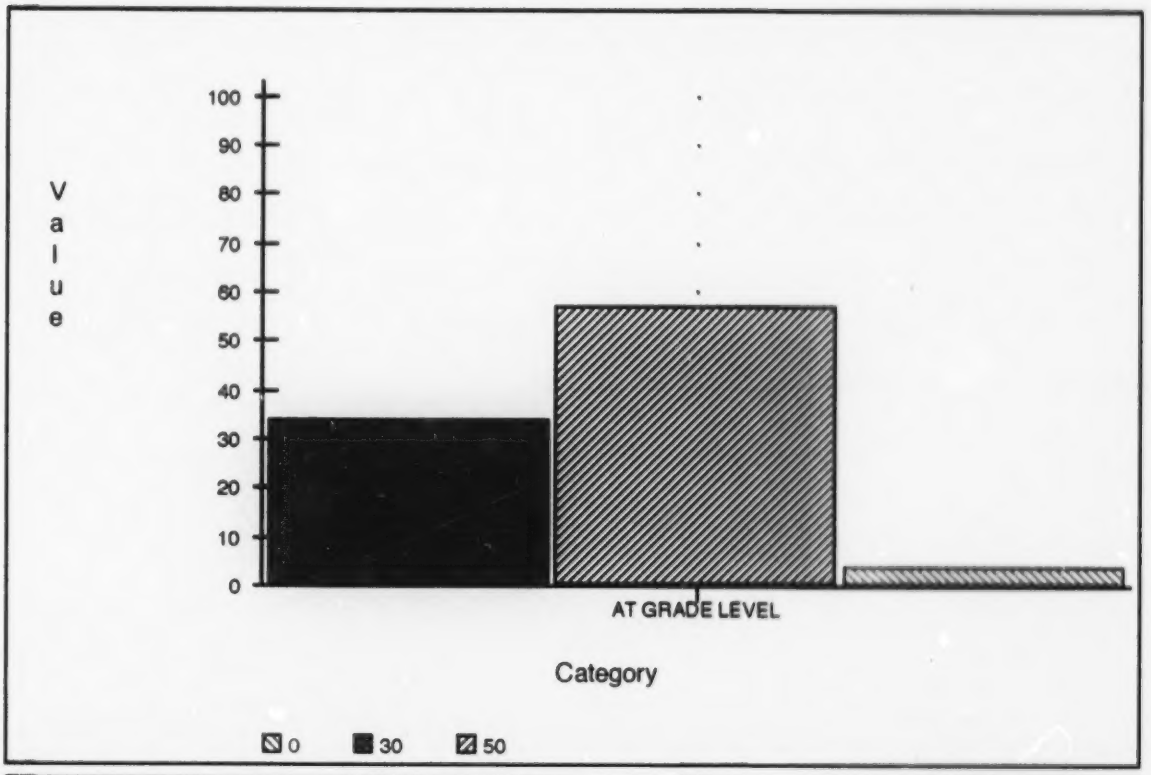
At first glance of the above pie chart it would seem that the parental emphasis on reading was a positive influence. Yet, after analyzing the data further it is disheartening to realize that the "highly emphasized" piece of the pie is only 7% higher than the "no response" piece of the pie. This leads to concerns about creating a partnership between the school and home environments. To establish a solid foundation for each student, all parties involved must be actively working toward a similar goal. Through further probing of data concerning "no responses", it was observed that the students who were low average to below average were the same students who did not return surveys. The validity in some of the returned responses

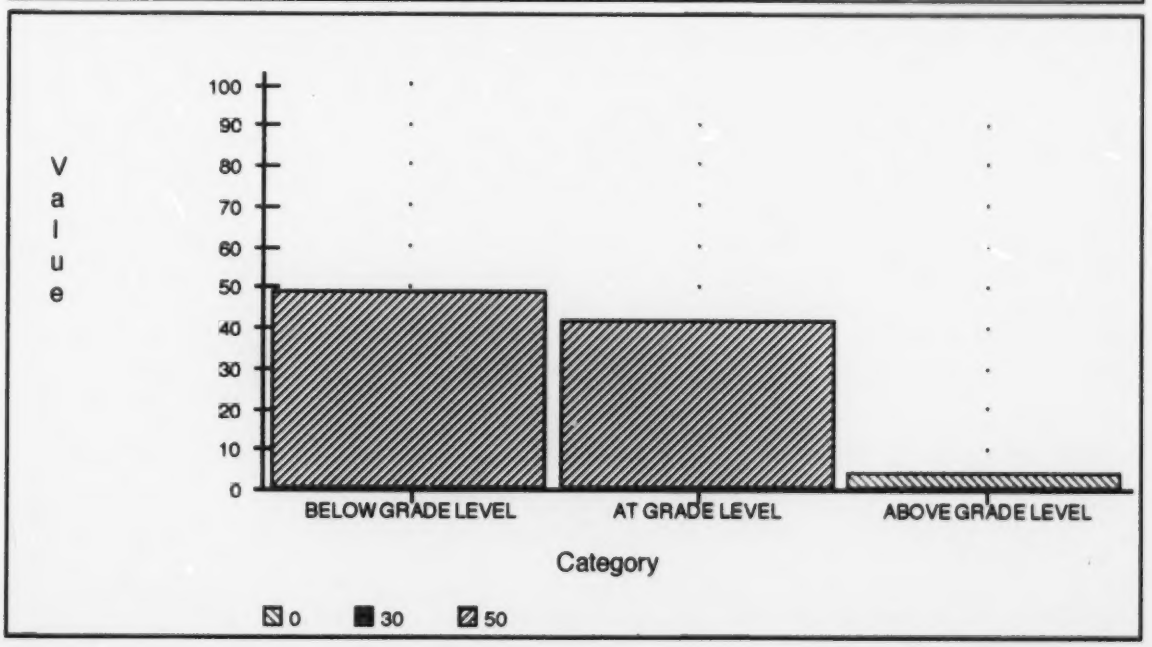
are questionable. In some cases, researchers felt that parents did not honestly answer the questions causing the pie chart to display information inadequately. This survey relayed a need for teamwork between parents and teachers in order to accomplish the ultimate goal of success for the child.

As a final step, the G.A.T.E.S McGinite Test was given to all children in the four clustered classrooms. This test was given to establish the grade level at which each child is independently working. The test was given by the classroom teacher and the Title I Reading Teacher in 25 minute time slots that took three days to administer. A summary of the test results follow.

Figures 2 and 3

G.A.T.E.S McGinite Fall Test Results





picture. Observations were also necessary to determine the comfort zone at which each student performed. The students who performed with above average scores appeared to be very confident in their test taking, staying focused on the contents of the test. The children who tested below average tended to spontaneously fill in answers before the content was presented. The students who performed at the average level tended to lack confidence in their abilities. They appeared to focus on reassurance from others as well as back tracking continuously. This group of students were never quite confident that they had chosen the correct response. Analysis of all data collected continues to support a weakness in student's reading foundation. 34 of the 97 students who took the test scored below grade level. 57 of the 97 students scored at grade level. Only 4 of the 97 students showed above grade level abilities. An even closer look at the data has shown 15 of the 57 at grade level group did not have a solid performance when given the test. In other words, through observation and test scores these 15 students could also be considered at risk of a solid reading foundation that will later hinder their reading performance. Taking this into consideration, the below average group could possibly be raised to 49 students who can be considered at risk. On the other end of the spectrum, it is disturbing that only 4 students have shown above level ability. When comparing the two charts, it is apparent that the teaching strategies must address areas that will increase student performance positively allowing for a more equally balanced classroom. There is a correlation between low reading skill performance and overall academic achievement in the classroom. Researchers are investigating the relationship between academic performance and self-esteem. They are also

probing the idea of enhancing critical thinking skills through increasing imagination and organizing information with the aide of various types of graphic organizers.

Probable Causes

The literature suggests several underlying causes for deficiency in the students' foundation. A child's success in school literacy programs often depends upon the experiences they have had at home prior to coming to school(Morrow & Young, 1996). Teachers agree that parents may intend to guide their child's education but are too busy caring for their other children or they are at work, or they feel insecure about familiarizing their child with essential concepts. Many parents are apprehensive about becoming involved in the school setting due to a residual negative attitude about their own school experience. Parental involvement is dependent upon the economic strains and time constraints competing with quality family time.

"The biggest concern about American education is that even our better students in our better schools are just going through the motions of education"(Gardner, Howard. 1997). Educators need to use modalities that can be incorporated into Gardner's seven intelligence's. Students must be able to manipulate their higher order thinking skills to solve problems and to transfer information into new situations. Students are not demonstrating these critical skills in their learning surroundings. The educational system places too much emphasis on memorization and standardized testing. Teachers instruct their students to perform rote task but forget to have students analyze and interpret information to actively apply to other areas. When children learn to solve problems on their own they realize they are independent thinkers causing self-esteem to naturally

develop. The earned self-esteem is beneficial and crucial to the student's academic success.

A summary of probable causes for the problem gathered from the site and literature include the following:

1. Previous exposure to literacy.
2. Demands of daily family routines.
3. Two family income.
4. Family economic status.
5. The absence of active learning resulting in non-transference.
6. Deficiency in higher order thinking skills.
7. Integrating modalities and multiple intelligence's.

Since students are not forming a solid reading foundation, early literacy skills should be emphasized to attain the proper fundamentals for the primary curriculum.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Educators have been debating over the relationship between self-esteem and student achievement for many years. The question which continually arises is, "which comes first, achievement or self-esteem?" (Shokrarii, Nina. 1996). There is no shortage of ways to define self-esteem. Perhaps the simplest one is found in Webster's Dictionary, which says that self-esteem is "satisfaction with ones self." As self awareness becomes more apparent to children, they begin to develop a self-evaluative process. Shokraii concludes that individuals have not one but several views of themselves.

> Psychologists generally split self-esteem into two types: earned self-esteem and global self-esteem. The concepts of each differ in critical ways:
>
> 1. Earned self-esteem- this is the self-esteem that people earn through their own accomplishments- satisfaction from having scored well on an exam, for example. The psychologist Barbara Learner says that earned self-esteem "is based on success in meeting the tests of reality - measuring up to standards at home and in school." Earned self-esteem possesses all of the positive character traits that ought to be encouraged and applauded, because it is ultimately based on work habits.

> 2. Global self-esteem: This refers to a general sense of pride in oneself. It is not grounded in a particular skill or achievement. This means that an underachieving student can still bask in the warmth of global self-esteem, even if the door to earned self-esteem is shut. Although theorists contend that this feeling of self-worth will inspire academic success, the reality is different. At best global self-esteem is meaningless. At worst, it is harmful. William Damon an educational psychologist at Brown University, warns that heightened global self-esteem can lead children to have "an exaggerated, though empty and ultimately fragile sense of their own powers....[or] a distrust of adult communication and self-doubt." (Shokaraii, 1996).

In essence, earned self-esteem becomes reality through hard work and intrinsic motivation. Lepper suggest that a student who is intrinsically motivated under takes an activity for the enjoyment it provides, the learning it permits, or the feelings of accomplishment it evokes. (Lepper, 1988). Earned self-esteem puts achievement above self-centeredness, and appears to be more transferable into life experiences. Global self-esteem seems to establish a false sense of self-worth that will crumble upon entering an environment that validates objective qualities. Lepper also agrees that a global self-esteem correlates with extrinsic motivation.(Lepper, 1988). The student who possess extrinsic motivation is one who works to obtain reward or avoid punishment such as grades, stickers, or teacher approval.

To transport children from global self-esteem to earned self-esteem, educators need to develop moral and intellectual goals that will encourage the children to look intrinsically as well as extrinsically for productive

and satisfying relations with others. It is our job as educators to pride them with such relations in the beginning years and as long as they are in our charge.

When children are born, they are born into a world of symbolic representations. They are expected to efficiently demonstrate the ability to interpret the symbols and manipulate them to create meaning derived from the symbols. When meaning has been gained through various types of interactions with the environment then learning has occurred. This perpetual process is one that needs to be positively enriched throughout one's lifetime. Forming a positive attitude toward learning will encourage the innate desire to gain meaning from interactions with others within a child's surroundings. A child's success in school literacy programs often depends upon the experience they have had at home prior to coming to school. (Morrow and Young,1996). Even though each child enters the formal school setting at different ability levels, each has been exposed to a variety of experiences that will aide them in learning. It is the teacher's job to evaluate these skills and integrate them into the classroom for substantial learning gains. In order for the teachers to enhance the student's literacy he must become a mentor or coach to the students.

The teacher who acknowledges and values what students bring to the learning situation and who understands the importance of using language to learn will structure the class time in different ways. (Livdahl, 1991). The teacher needs to create an atmosphere which allows the learner to choose literacy activities. These activities should be desirable and encourage the motivation for children to engage in meaningful thinking

strategies. Teachers should seek ways for students to collaborate and shape meaning. Then the students can report these meanings to their peers. Reading should be interesting and enjoyable. Thus, increasing the motivation to engage as well as sustain reading activities. This creates an intrinsic desire to break the unknown symbolic codes. To become lifelong literacy learners, children must be motivated to engage in literacy activities, as well as acquire the cognitive skills needed to read.(Wigfield, 1996).

Children who value reading and develop self-assurance in their ability to read use or elaborate cognitive strategies. With continued use of the cognitive strategies, the student will internalize reading techniques which allows reading to become less labored and more fluent. Once the student develops confidence in their ability to use reading strategies, they can transfer this knowledge to other areas of learning. Students should be taught how to apply knowledge and problem solving techniques to new situations. Far too often classrooms are built around isolated subskills. Children who have failed to read by the end of third grade, have a common problem. Most non-readers share the lack to recognize phonemes. Phonemes are the smallest units of speech-the basic building blocks. (Council for Exceptional Children, 1996)

This brings us to yet another debate among notable researchers. This debate deals with teaching sub-skill verses teaching in a holistic manner. The holistic forum suggests that reading is psycholinguistic in nature. Approaching reading in a holistic manner gives students more of a natural way to learn, allowing them to internalize skills throughout their life. Whereas, the subskill forum states that efficient reading instruction is

focused through the use of objectives related to reading skills. Success in this forum is highly dependent upon subskills. Honig suggest, reading success depends on the child developing the ability to pick out the smallest "sound chunks" that make up words.(Honig, 1996). He goes on to state that the amount of time a student is engaged in phonics instruction is highly predictive of subsequent reading achievement. Others believe that a well-rounded curriculum must consist of both school of thoughts equally. Transference of learning only occurs if both approaches are used simultaneously. Educators have a hard time appreciating the difficulty that is involved in transferring knowledge from one domain to another. "Unless one takes the 'high road to transfer' and helps students to see explicitly the connections (and non-connections) between domains, generalization and transfer will not occur with any reliability." (Howard Gardner, 1997). The phonics-whole language debate is a destructive controversy.

No two people are exactly the same. Each is individualistic in their genetic input as well as in their individual experiences. It is essential to recognize this unique individualism, but the uniqueness of each person does not help us much in understanding the major factors that contribute to the alleviation of disadvantageous influences. In order to reach all types of individuals it is essential that educators find common patterns of predictable characteristics. It is on the basis of individuality that Howard Gardner developed his multiple intelligence's. "It is of the utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligence's, and all of the combinations of intelligence's. We are all so different largely because we all have different combinations of

intelligence's. If we recognize this, I think we will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems that we face in the world." (Gardner,1997). Gardner's theory hopes to broaden the scope of human potential beyond the IQ score. He seriously questions the IQ tests potential of measuring an individual's intelligence. Instead his purpose is to measure an individual's intelligence within the learning environment. Gardner theorizes that intelligence should be measured by problem solving ability and producing solutions within a natural setting. He uses his theory that learning is based on seven types of intelligence's.

Children have the desire to learn. They are driven by this desire to acquire the skills, understanding, and control of their world. Children must negotiate the patterns, and meanings involved with language. The process of developing meaningful use of language begins when the first signal is received, the first words are heard. Children observe and absorb the meaningful interaction of the people who surround them. This is how children first learn that the sounds that people make form patterns that convey messages. It is the imitation of these sounds and the reaction to the child's utterances that creates an attitude about language. It is essential that the people communicating with these novice communicators take the time and energy to listen to the messages being sent. Once a mutual understanding is reached the receiver must respond, at the child's level, in a way that demonstrates an understanding of what the child has said. It is at this point that the child can feel successful in the world of conversation. Learning to communicate should thus be thought of as the result of a partnership: in which parent and other members of the community provide the evidence and then encourage children. (Wigfield,

1996). When children are encouraged to communicate in a meaningful way they can gain confidence. Then they can bring their knowledge to the shared construction of an answer. There is a good chance that they will be able to assimilate some of the information that is offered. As a result, they will be able to add to and, if necessary, modify their internal model of the world. As children have more and more positive experiences , they will develop the skills to ask questions, process information, and formulate answers. Thus language becomes a tool for thinking. Children who have reached the point of internally processing information can construct their own knowledge. These children need to be encouraged to process information. Forcing these children to follow routine learning tasks, which lack meaning, can stifle the higher order thinking that these interpersonal learners have developed.

When these learners leave their home and enter school they need to have the continued guidance of a skilled adult. The skills and direction are provided by the adult, but the interpretation and internalization are done by each individual child. He or she will attach new information to the previous experience that they have. This process-a continuous making and remaking of meanings in the lifelong enterprise of constructing is a progressively more and more effective mental model of the world in which one lives. Learning is never complete.(Livdahl, 1991).

Children need to be given opportunities to discover how meaning and graphic representation are related, through activities involving reading and writing what have purpose and significance in their own right. Unfortunately reading and writing are often treated as two separate entities. Some schools hold off the writing process until sight word

vocabulary is within a certain range. This practice is counterproductive, children have experiences to share, what they have to say has value, and they deserve the chance to share their experiences. In fact, emerging evidence has shown that experience with print (through reading and writing) help children develop an understanding of the conventions, purposes. and functions of print. (Gunn, 1996). Allowing children to express themselves encourages an enthusiasm for literacy. The process of writing gives evidence of learning through informing the mind and engaging the learner. This process tends to increase the understanding of what is being taught.

Increasing parental involvement in schools has become a nation-wide trend. Most parents do library or office work, cafeteria monitoring, and even some classroom help. The more parents get involved in the schools, the more they develop a sense of belonging to the school. Schools should have a warm and friendly atmosphere for parents to come in and get involved. Research clearly shows that children's academic performance is higher at schools that have high parental involvement. Parents are the ones in charge of a variety of reading materials in the home, school absenteeism, and excessive television watching. Parental involvement has emerged as one of the hottest new developments in educational reform.

One of the strengths of parental involvement is to have parents involved in school wide issues. If there is something parents don't like about the school, it is the school's job to get these parents involved to help make appropriate changes. Administration and teachers are establishing closer relationships on an individual basis with parents, so

they're more understanding of issues going on at home as well as at school. With involvement between schools and parents, there is more of an awareness of each other and of the total child.

Teachers value parental input. The goal should be to build a collaborative relationship revolving around the child. It is important to keep the main focus on the child, and to keep the best interest of the child in mind. Educators who learn to work closely with parents and listen carefully, will realize that teaching can be more effective, therefore, more satisfying.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of exposure to a variety of current educational methods the students will develop an excitement for learning, during the period of September 1997 to March 1998, the targeted students from the three clustered classrooms will increase enthusiasm during class activities as a result of exposure to different teaching activities, as measured by student portfolios, teacher observation, parent reflections, reflective student journals, and active participation in learning centers.

As a result of exposure to a variety of current educational methods the students will increase reading awareness, during the period of September 1997 to March 1998, the targeted students from the three clustered classrooms will increase reading skills awareness, as measured by the G.A.T.E.S. McGinite Test, rubrics, student artifacts, and reading inventories.

In order to accomplish the terminal objectives, the following processes are necessary:

1. Observational checklist to monitor the specified activities.
2. A survey will be created and administered to selectively determine students' ideas and interests.

3. Tests will be administered to determine academic achievement.

4. A series of learning activities that enhance the acquisition of basic skills will be developed for the learning process.

5. Portfolios will be encouraged and used for assessment.

6. Rubrics will be developed collaboratively by the teacher and students.

7. Graphic Organizers will be used to engaged students in the learning process.

8. Reflections will be developed to assess the attitudes and self-analysis in reading growth.

9. Parental involvement programs will be developed to encourage excitement for learning.

10. Community will be involved for transfer of learning.

Project Action Plan

The following action plan was developed to implement a reading foundation which will enhance a positive self-esteem and create an enthusiasm for learning. The plan is focusing on the basic reading skills that may be found to be inadequate for reading success. When the plan is implemented in a regular education classroom it is hoped that the learners within that classroom will demonstrate growth and success in the necessary reading skills. The plan identifies the deficit reading areas and increases success in the reading foundation. Thus, transferring into positive self-esteem and creating an enthusiasm for learning.

Stage One: Examine existing reading abilities.

<u>Critical Action Steps</u>
~Administer G.A.T.E.S. McGinite Test
~Administer a teacher made reading inventory
~Distribute parent survey
~Formulate observational checklist

Recommended Action Steps
~Record initial reading scores
~Work with consultant
~List and review possible avenues that will meet our goal
~Give opportunity for shared readings

Stage Two: Analyze reading abilities.

Critical Action Steps
~Graph information for analysis of testing scores
~Decide what areas of reading to emphasize
~Decide on appropriate programs to enhance abilities.

Recommended Action Steps
~Organize materials and thoughts for later use
~Make clipboard to use for observational recordings
~Finalize plans for programs that will need administrator approval
~Gather information and sources
~Collaborate ideas with colleagues

Stage Three: Incorporate activities that will strengthen reading foundation enthusiastically.

Critical Action Step
~Organize learning centers
~Incorporate metacognitive skills into teaching styles
~Develop rubrics for thematic/basal programs
~Create portfolios and list of items that will be included inside of each
~Create plan time with colleagues to implement new ideas and work on old ones.

Recommended Action Plan
~Make list of ideas that are worth saving
~Take pictures of activities
~Develop self-analysis and reflections
~Use observational checklist
~Keep portfolios in a workable place
~Rubrics are made from teacher/student ideas and posted where every can

view
~Keep centers simple for discovery learning or review of skills (independent areas)
~Post student work where it can be seen
~Clear expectations
~Give many opportunities with print

Stage Four: Assess progress of action plan.

Critical Action Steps
~Administer G.A.T.E.S. McGinite Test
~Give informal reading inventory
~Review portfolios with student, parent, and teacher present (1st and 3rd quarters)
~Conference with individual students (reviewing observational list)

Recommended Action Steps
~Graph scores from reading results
~Compare scores from reading results
~Share strengths and weaknesses with students
~Meet with consultant and discuss findings
~Send a reflection and/or survey to parents
~Have students reflect on learning
~Make a binder of all portfolios

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the interventions surveys, observational checklist, and tests will be created and administered. In addition, portfolios of student work in all areas will be kept throughout the intervention period. Learning centers will be established as well as rubrics being developed to further assess progress. Student journals and reading inventories will be reviewed on a consistent basis to chart progress in the reading and writing areas. Parental involvement will be highly encouraged to form a partnership that will hopefully benefit the

child. Reflections will also be distributed and collected to reflect upon attitudes about the growth of learning.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to expose students to a variety of current educational methods that would allow them to become excited about learning while at the same time forming a firm reading foundation. In the first and second grade targeted classrooms, implementation of cooperative learning, learning centers, multiple intelligence's, teacher/student rubrics, graphic organizers, parental involvement activities, and peer coaching were chosen to effect the desired changes.

Cooperative learning was used to teach social skills and to create an environment that encouraged communication, trust, responsibility, and compassion in one's self as well as others encountered on a consistent basis. A weekly social skill was chosen to be highlighted as a center point for students' behavior. As the week progressed students were reminded of the skill that was chosen for the weeks skill. Students were also praised when "caught" exercising the skill appropriately encouraging further use of the desired behavior. Every week a new skill was selected to intertwine with prior skills taught previously to establish positive discipline into the classroom setting. These same skills were concentrated on and isolated when working in cooperative groups. Group activities were planned with the components of B.U.I.L.D. Following is an

explanation of B.U.I.L.D attached with a few examples in each category. The mnemonic B.U.I.L.D. is formed when taking the first letter of each component.

Build in higher order thinking skills through critical and creative thinking, decision making, application, and transfer.
Unite Teams through team bonding and group identity, shared materials, single product, consensus, and group reward.
Insure individual learning through random responses, assigned roles, and individual applications.
Look over and discuss through a team ad, teacher observation, a success award and individual transfer and application.
Develop social skills through affirming, accepting others ideas, disagreeing with ideas not other people, reaching consensus, and encouraging others.

Cooperative learning was the second part of our chunking method. The chunking method was a progression of steps taken to encourage risk taking, transfer of skills, and executing social skills. The process started with introducing a new skill in a whole group setting allowing for ample practice time as a group. Students were not expected to do any individual work. This first step was to increase motivation and to allow the boys and girls to actively become familiar with the new concept. The same skill was then incorporated into our cooperative learning phase where students could become even more familiar with the skill in a small group setting while implementing the weekly social skill. The students' confidence level was slowly taken from the lower end to a higher level of

risk. When this phase was completed then the students were asked to accomplish a task on their own for transfer of knowledge.

The cooperative learning section was the meat of the chunking process. Base groups consisting of 4 or 5 members were established quarterly heterogenously by ability. Often base groups were jigsawed randomly by various techniques. Groups were monitored to observe social skills being reinforced and for understanding of material. "Caught Being Good" was a technique highly supported during this working time.

The multiple intelligence's were a vital factor in developing each student academically to their highest plateau. By becoming aware of each student's strengths and weaknesses the facilitator knew how to redirect student's thinking to organize thoughts with the use of various teaching methods to decode ambiguous information. Graphic Organizers were utilized to assist students visually and mentally to remember important information. Poetry and songs were taught to musically reinforce concepts. Motions were often created to physically aid to the remembrance of words. Mnemonics were concocted as a group effort making relative meaning that would allow students to transfer their knowledge at a later time. Cooperative learning also served as an avenue to establish teamwork, cooperation, and consensus. These are necessary elements to fortify interpersonal skills. Students were asked to keep journals, logs, and reflective pieces to metacognitively convey their learning's. Presentations were generated to allow for speaking in front of an audience. Teaching information to peers served as an extension of learning to approve critical thinking skills and self analysis of concepts. The multiple intelligence's were used simultaneously with a particular

concept to reach as many students as possible. When skills were chunked or themes were developed each intelligence was insure to be addressed with the aid of a multiple intelligence grid that helped structured the origination of plans.

Learning centers were formulated daily in correspondence with the multiple intelligence's in conjunction with the entire curriculum. Activities were chosen for centers to enhance the acquisition of current curriculum or as an anticipatory set for upcoming concepts. Rotation of these centers were constructed to last for five days with 25-30 minute slots permitting each student to be actively engaged. Weekly the facilitator would select a different central location to administer individual guidance. Most often an artifact permitted the facilitator to assess the need for further instruction with a particular concept. Randomly, the artifacts were placed into the child's working portfolio for later reference. Transference of social skills was also noted for later reference, also.

Peer coaching and parental involvement coincided to bridge the gap between school to home. Development of a weekly planning time was formed to generate ideas for implantation into the classroom and to assess current learning strategies. Opportunities for parent involvement were circulated so parents had many different openings to become involved in their child's education. A repertoire was devised by displaying shared responsibilities between teacher and parent. This permitted the transference of learning's from school to home. It also allowed parents to become knowledge about classroom expectations.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of students establishing a firm reading foundation a triangular process among individual portfolios, the G.A.T.E.S. McGinite, and teacher observation/surveys was devised. Portfolios were needed to show the development of a child's growth pattern. The collection of materials should be a sampling of a wide variety of cognitive processes, affected responses and literacy activities. Portfolios provide an active, collaborative reflection of both teacher and student. Portfolios allow a teacher to evaluate his/her teaching effectiveness and it helps us with our instructional decisions. Portfolios need to be assessable to administrators, parents, teacher, and children. Portfolios are valuable during conference times, as well. With the above information in mind, the researchers we will describe in depth the process chosen to evaluate growth in reading.

Portfolios were used as an authentic assessment tool. Structured with a systematic approach. It was not merely the collection of papers, but an organized file of works. The materials assembled in the student portfolio focused on student reflections, teacher feedback, parent feedback, and artifact folder. These files were color coded and systematized in a corrugated box. Student data and interest inventories were also included inside the student reflection file. On the outside of the teacher feedback folder a graphic organizer was attached to keep a visual note of items inside of all folders pertaining to a particular child. See appendix for graphic organizer. Potential portfolio materials were collected throughout the week and placed in an expandable working folder.

The expandable folder was sent home on the first day of school so that

the students could personalize the folder that would later be known as their working folder. This folder was personalized so the students could produce ownership that would transfer over to their learning. At the end of each week, the working folder was sorted and organized. The student was responsible for putting articles from the folder into three separate piles. A pile for review, a pile for take-home, and a pile for the trash was formed. After the teacher/student agreed upon the contents of each pile the student put the papers in their appropriate places. The teacher and student each chose an artifact from the review file to place inside of the folder labeled artifact folder. The student then was asked to write a reflection on the chosen artifact. The reflection was attached to the artifact. An attached bi-weekly reflection was attached to the existing take-home pile. Students put these papers inside of their mailbox to be delivered to home for parents review. Parents returned their reflection to school where it was placed inside of the parent feedback folder. The teacher made appropriate markings on the graphic organizer to clarify completion of reflections.

Teacher/student observation were used as a tool to accurately assess students in various working relationships. Rubrics were establish with collaborative input from teacher as well as students. These rubrics set attainable expectations and set guidelines for assessing quality of work. Conferencing was embraced to formulate an agreeable grade. While working in groups a teacher or student monitor used tally marks to note strengths and weaknesses to initiate discussion and evaluate performance. Yet, another evaluation tool for perforce was to use a looks like/ sounds like chart. This chart set regulations for expected behavior.

Parents want to be involved with their students' educational progress. Communication is a three-way process involving the child, parent, and teacher. To produce an alternative to the stressful traditional teacher conferences a Portfolio Night was adapted. The conference folder was utilized during Portfolio Night along with the teacher observation notes. A collection of notations conveying student feelings about their progress and future goals were referred to for evaluation on students growth. Portfolio Night allowed for the teacher, student, and parent to evaluate many different areas of the child's education realm. Upon entering the school, parents and their child were directed to the gym where tables were available for previewing work. Tape recorders were available to listen to a taping of their child to auditorily hear the progression of reading fluency. Parents were asked to interact with their child to fill out a survey reflecting growths and attitudes about their understandings thus far in their current grade level. Time slots were organized in 90 minute blocks with five different families involved. While individual families reflected, the teacher conference with one family at a time. Discussion revolved around collection of quarterly reflections. This proved to be a delightful way to meet on common grounds involving all parties. A stress-free atmosphere was enjoyed by all. Parents commented on the relaxation and in depth evaluation of their child's progress. This was more than they expected. Future goals are set for the following quarters. Portfolio Night reconvenes after completion of the third quarter.

The G.A.T.E.S. McGinite test Level R served as an assessment for which to evaluate reading achievement both at the beginning and end of Grade 1

and Grade 2. It is also particularly useful in measuring the reading skills of those children who have made less-than-average progress in reading by the end of a targeted grade level.

In order to measure adequately the growth in reading achievement of first and second grade children, there must be many easy items on the test that are suitable for children who are just beginning to learn to read. There must also be many harder items that are suitable for children at the end of the targeted grade level, some who read quite well. The context items that ask the child to read words and incomplete sentences are examples of the harder items. Many children at the beginning of a grade level will not be able to read these words and incomplete sentences. But most at the end of the year should do so readily.

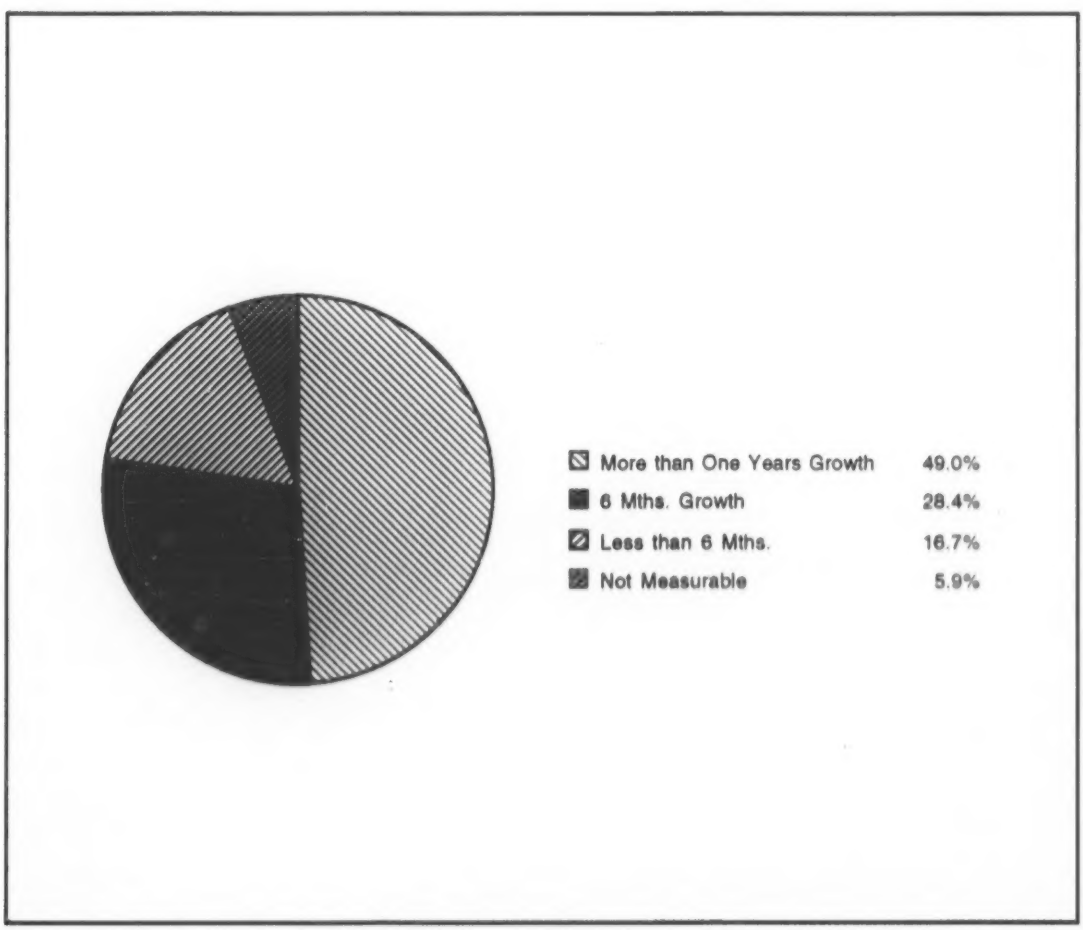
Level R has been designed to minimize the problems presented by the necessary inclusion of a wide range of item difficulties. The children are paced through the test, being allowed time to do the best they can with each item. Each item presents the child with the same task-that of choosing one of four words or pictures arranged in a row. The test is divided into three parts, to be given in three 20-25 minute sessions. Level R is a measure of beginning reading achievement. It can also help to identify strengths and weaknesses in four basic skill areas:

Use of letter-sound correspondences:
  Initial consonants and consonant clusters
Use of letter-sound correspondences:
  Final consonants and consonant clusters
Use of letter-sound correspondences:
  Vowels
Use of sentence context

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the G.A.T.E.S. test was given in September to establish a starting point to determine the students reading level. In March the test was administered once again in the same fashion as prior. The same testing style was followed so testers could be as accurate as possible with results. After analyzing and computing each student's growth, the testers compiled the information into a chart to visually note the growth.

Figure 4

Reading Growth



After analyzing the preceding chart you will notice an extreme increase in reading growth. To figure out the amount of growth each child made, the researchers concentrated on the grade level the student tested at in the Fall, and compared it with the grade equivalent the student tested at in March. The difference between the two became the amount of growth calculated. Students were not necessary working at grade level, but more importantly made gains toward forming a solid reading foundation. The researchers were very satisfied with the results. There was a positive trend with the amount of students working at or above grade level. In the Fall, there was only 4 students exceeding grade level status. In the Spring, a remarkable 50 students performed above grade level. In the Fall, 57 students performed at grade level. In the Spring, 29 students either progressed to grade level or remained at grade level. In the Fall, 37 students were below grade level. In the Spring, 17 students remained below grade level. Most students seemed to score high enough to lift them to the next level. It was not evident of any students who did not show any growth or a decline of growth. All student grew at least 3 months throughout the testing period. It was amazing to see some students show two years growth. After analyzing the data further, it was interesting to see the students with little support at home had grown the least. The order of scores from high to low appeared to be the same student line-up in both the Fall and the Spring with only a few exceptions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on establishing a firm foundation for reading while taking in consideration the need to increase self-esteem and motivation, the students' showed a marked

improvement in the reading arena. The increased confidence level through the "chunking down" process seemed to have a positive transferal when the students were asked to do group work as well as independent work. Social Skills taught through weekly lessons, and practiced during cooperative learning appeared to help global self-esteem and motivation increase. The influence of positive feedback from the facilitator as well as peers created a risk free feeling for students who lacked confidence to share their point-of-view. Clear expectations and parent/teacher collaboration established a unified and productive educational relationship. Through the use of multiple intelligence's all students were allow to engage in enriching activities which were geared toward their learning style. The use of centers allowed for risk taking elements that also were focused on developing learning styles equated to each students' learning modalities. Peer coaching generated the interactive factor needed to permit teamwork, cooperation, and risk-taking among teachers involved in the clustering classrooms. Students imitated the behavior modeled by the facilitators to produce a supportive framework. The framework developed by all involved created a structural foundation for reading development.

Creating a partnership among teachers, parents, and other support staff that strive for the similar goal of the children is a main recommendation given by the researchers. Developing such a working relationship with clear expectations and reachable goals allows all pieces of the puzzle to fit together to produce growth in all areas of the curriculum. Parents appear more willing to become involved when they feel welcomed and confident that their child's best interest is at stake. Concocting different

activities that parents feel worthy doing will give them purpose to become involved. With the involvement and teamwork in place the teacher can then expedite worthwhile teaching strategies. As mentioned prior, the researchers feel that the multiple intelligence's was a base for these strategies and should be included in classrooms everywhere. Multiple Intelligence's allowed for individuals at all levels to tap into their strengths and work on their weaknesses. Also, children were actively engaged at least 60% of the day working out problems that could be transferred into life skills. The other 40% of the time student could reflective quietly before sharing with others. The "chunking down" method was also one which should be standardized in classrooms. Findings appeared to increase motivation for learning when expectations and understanding was present. Concepts were addressed in various ways and a multitude of times. Researchers were sure to address concepts and skills at least 7 times before actual assessment took place. This increased reliability of mastery. Introducing a specific social skill and having students discuss the behavior, set a foundation of respect in the classroom among classmates. By isolating the behavior, practicing the behavior, and then intertwining the behavior into life situations the students formed good habits on teamwork, cooperation, and patience for one another. These are skills that some adults still need to possess. Skills that are the centerpiece to a community of people. Whenever teachers can share ideas for the common goal of students it creates a win-win scenario.

At times the study became discouraging due to the overwhelming number of academically challenged students. As mentioned in previous

chapters, the cluster classrooms had a great deal of these students in them. Patience, consideration for home environment, and understanding of abilities played a significant part in the planning process. In the future, this type of class setting must be limited to the number of students seeking outside support. Often the academically challenged students were the same students pulled out of class routines to seek guidance and instruction from support personnel. These students are the ones who need a stable routine without interruptions. The flow of class lessons were often disrupted. Yet, another discouraging factor, was outside support and encouragement from parents. Sometimes teachers cannot do enough to involve the parents whose child would most benefit. This is an ongoing issue that will continue to be a problem. Education, as all other professions, have highs and lows. As educators, we must reach for the stars. Accepting only the best efforts of our students will enable everyone involved to reach their goals and shine.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Reading Survey

Reading Survey

Please fill out this survey to help us determine your child's prior reading experience. Circle the letter that best describes your child. Please return your survey by Friday, August 29th. Thank you for your time.

Y=yes N=no S=sometimes

1. My child looks through books.	**Y N S**
2. My child uses his imagination to create a story.	**Y N S**
3. My child enjoys being read to by others.	**Y N S**
4. My child enjoys learning new things.	**Y N S**
5. My child recognizes letters and/or words on signs, in books, etc.	**Y N S**
6. My child uses pictures in a book to tell a story.	**Y N S**
7. My child recalls imformation that is present in a story.	**Y N S**
8. My child can write his/her letters.	**Y N S**
b. names/words.	**Y N S**
c. sentences.	**Y N S**
9. My child can read simple words.	**Y N S**
10. My child enjoys school.	**Y N S**

Appendix B
Parent Reading Survey

READING SURVEY

October 3, 1997

Dear Parents,

Please take the time to fill out this reading survey. We will be using the information collected in our masters research project. We are currently in our final year at St. Xavier's University and are relying on your cooperation. Thank you for your honest and quick responses.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Manietta
Mrs. O'Donnell
Mrs. Polson

Please mark the box next to your answer.

1. How often does an adult read to your child? (per week)

☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5+

2. How often does your child go to the library? (per week)

☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5+

3. Does your child have a library card?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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Appendix B
Parent Reading Survey (continued)

READING SURVEY

4. Do you review your child's reading with him/her? (Ask questions)

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. What type of reading materials are present in your home?

☐ None ☐ Magazines ☐ Newspapers ☐ books ☐ Other

6. When is your child involved in library programs?

☐ School year ☐ Summer ☐ Not at all

7. How much emphasis do you put on taking time to read?

☐ Highly encouraged
☐ Somewhat encouraged
☐ Not really emphasized

8. How much time do you spend reading? (hours per week)

☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5-6 ☐ 7+

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Appendix C
Child Introduction

Introducing . . . Your Child

I'd like to know more about your child, through your eyes. The more I know, the better I can tailor an educational and motivational program to fit his or her particular needs.

Please answer the questions and complete the information below. Remember, this is from your point of view. I will discuss the same information with your child.

Child's name_____

* List five words that best describe your child's character (competitive, cheerful, perfectionist).

* What motivates your child?

* What upsets your child?

* What are your child's out of school interests and activities?

* How would you rate your child's study habits?
Circle one:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(poor) (super)

* What study skills does your child need to develop?
(neatness, timeliness, organization, etc.

*Which academic subject is your child's best? Worst?

* What particular academic area would you like to see stressed?

*What social skills would you like to see developed?

* Are there any personal or physical problems I should know (or conference privately) about:?

* Other comments or concerns?

Parent signature(s)_____

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Appendix D
Second Grade Checklist

SECOND GRADE CHECK LIST

1. CHILD IS ABLE TO WRITE A SENTENCE.
   A. SENTENCE BEGINS WITH A CAPITAL LETTER: YES NO
   B. SENTENCE ENDS WITH A PUNCTUATION MARK: YES NO
   C. SENTENCE IS COMPLETE: YES NO

2. CHILD CAN WRITE FULL NAME: YES NO.

3. CHILD CAN WRITE ADDRESS. YES NO

4. CHILD KNOWS PHONE NUMBER. YES NO

5. CHILD CAN READ PRE PRIMER DOLCH WORDS.
   A. WITH EASE (NO HESITATION, LESS THAN ONE ERROR).
   B. WITH SOME EFFORT (HESITATES LESS THAN FIVE WORDS/5 OR LESS ERRORS).
   C. WITH EFFORT (CHILD HESITATES ON MORE THAN 5 WORDS/ MAKES MORE THAN 5 ERRORS).
   D. NO ATTEMPT MADE.

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Appendix D
Second Grade Checklist (continued)

SECOND GRADE CHECK LIST

6. CHILD CAN READ PRIMER DOLCH WORDS

   A. WITH EASE (NO HESITATION, NO MORE THAN ONE ERROR).

   B. WITH SOME EFFORT (HESITATES ON NO MORE THAN FIVE WORDS / LESS THAN FIVE ERRORS).

   C. WITH EFFORT (CHILD HESITATES ON MORE THAN FIVE WORDS / MAKES MORE THAN FIVE ERRORS).

   D. NO ATTEMPT MADE.

7. CHILD CAN READ ORALLY WITH FLUENCY.

   A. FLUENT (NO CUES NEEDED).

   B. SOMEWHAT FLUENT (THREE TO FIVE CUES NEEDED PER PAGE).

   C. STRUGGLES (MORE THAN FIVE CUES NEEDED PER PAGE).

COMMENTS:

Appendix E
Portfolio

10 Reasons To Use Classroom Portfolios

1. The Report Card Grading Period is confined to six or nine weeks, portfolios are ongoing.
2. Student work has a central place for storage and makes self-assessment more practical.
3. Parent, student and teacher gain a common point of reference.
4. Every student is treated as an individual with unique needs and strengths. This is harder to discern through traditional reporting methods.
5. Portfolios give parent conferences a structure and basis for dialog.
6. Portfolios help to increase student awareness of needs on a self-esteem neutral basis.
7. Learning is perceived as meaningful and with purpose with portfolios.
8. Portfolios tell a story about a year in a student's life. Report cards are less clear and somewhat subjective. This is helpful to the teachers who will teach the next years class.
9. Every child is given individual time with the teacher.
10. Students have a better recollection of school work. (What did you do in school today?)

Appendix F
Portfolio Contents

PORTFOLIOS

Contained in the students' portfolios are:

1. Report Card, work habits checklist, and any awards for the student.

2. Handwriting: Students copied their names on September 3, and again on October 29. Please note the differences. Also note the student's handwriting on the poem written on November 3.

3. "Draw-a-Person:" Students drew a person at the beginning of September and again at the end of October. Again, please note the differences.

4. Reading Tests: Skills Assessment and Integrated Performance Assessment.

   The skills assessment tests the short a and o sounds, the final consonants d, g, t, n, the suffix -s added to nouns to make plurals and to verbs to make the singular form of the verb, vocabulary words covered in the book Whisper a Song, and comprehension. Most of this test was read to students.

   The Integrated Performance Assessment is a story called "My Brown Bear Barney." The story was read to students. At the end students were to predict what would happen next. Most likely the girl in the story would take the bear Barney to school with her in spite of her mother's admonition that bears do not go to school.

   This test was scored on a point scale from 1 to 3. The highest score given is "3." To achieve this score, the student's response should show the inference that the girl will take Barney to school.

   To achieve a score of "2," the student's response should indicate a basic understanding of the ideas in the passage. Although he/she may not have realized that Barney probably went to school with the little girl, the student did indicate that the bear went someplace else.

Appendix F
Portfolio Contents (continued)

A score of "1" indicates that the student did not really comprehend the reading passage.

5. **Art Activity: This activity tests the student's fine motor skills and, especially, the student's ability to follow teacher directions.**

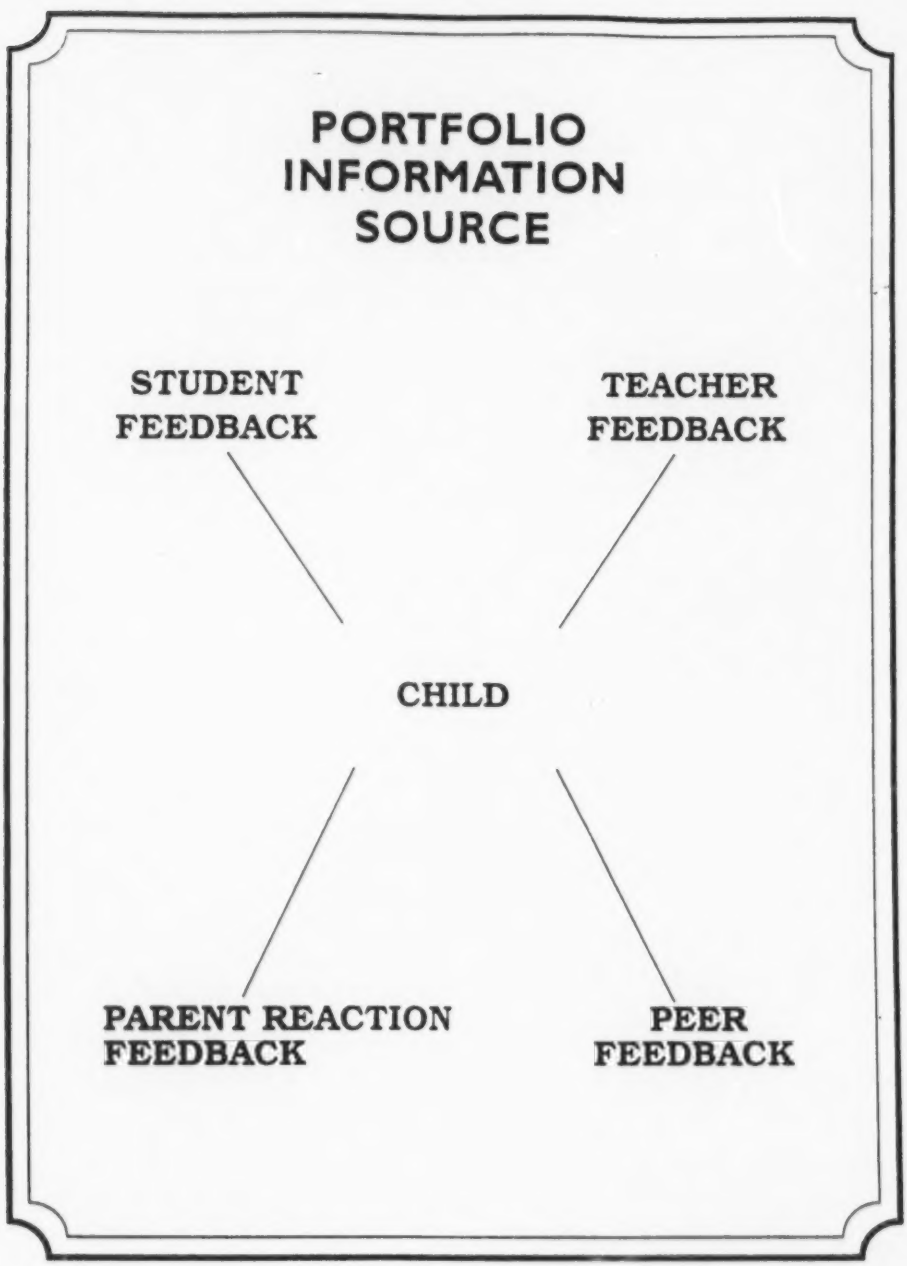
6. **A final math test for Chapter 2**

7. **Vocabulary Test: This test includes all the vocabulary words from the book Whisper a Song and from the first theme of the book Jump Right In.**

8. **Audiocassette of student reading take home book "Flap and Jump" and a selection from the first book, Whisper a Song.**

PLEASE LEAVE THE PORTFOLIO FOLDER AND THE CASSETTE WITH THE TEACHER!!

Appendix G
Portfolio Information



Appendix H
Portfolio Conference Schedule

Portfolio Conference

Elementary School
September

2 Larry	3 Sue	4 Mary	5 Tina	6 Jake
9 Earl	10 Kyle	11 Sue M.	12 Debbie	13 Bill
16 Bob	17 Joe	18 Betty Nancy	19 Amy	20 Kari
23 Roberta Ricki	24 Sara Dan	25 Tyler Chuck	26 Abby	27 Ted
30 Matt Mike				

Appendix I
Portfolio Conference Reflection

Portfolio Conferences

Items That Were Discussed

Date: _____
Time: _____

Date: _____
Time: _____

Date: _____
Time: _____

Date: _____
Time: _____

Date: _____
Time: _____

Appendix J
Portfolio Conference Selection

Portfolio Selection

Name_____

This is my _____ Favorite Selection.

_____ Best Effort Selection.

_____ Needs Work Selection.

_____ Shows Improvement Selection.

The title is _____

I chose it because _____

_____

_____

Portfolio Selection

Name_____

This is my _____ Favorite Selection.

_____ Best Effort Selection.

_____ Needs Work Selection.

_____ Shows Improvement Selection.

The title is _____

I chose it because _____

_____

_____

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Appendix K
Portfolio Parent Reflection

Dear Parents,

Please look through the attached folder of papers. This is an opportunity for you to have a conference with your own child about progress and concerns. Working together is a key factor in a successful home and school relationship. Please fill out the sheet as listed below and return to me by _____.

Name of child _____

Date _____

I/we looked through the folder and talked about the following:

_____

_____

_____

I/we have concerns about:

_____

_____

_____

What questions do you have of me, your child's teacher?

_____

_____

_____

Please call me _____ Signed by _____

Conference requested _____

OTHER COMMENTS:_____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix L
Portfolio Self-assessment

Name _____

Date _____

Rate yourself in the following areas by putting an "X" by the columns that apply.

		Needs Work	Okay	Good Job
1.	My behavior	____	____	____
2.	My handwriting	____	____	____
3.	My homework	____	____	____
4.	Class participation	____	____	____
5.	Organization	____	____	____
6.	Meeting deadlines	____	____	____
7.	Following directions	____	____	____
8.	Working with others	____	____	____
9.	Using time wisely	____	____	____
10.	_____	____	____	____

For the areas checked as "Needs work" I will try to

_____

_____.

Comments and concerns I have are _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix M
Portfolio Groupwork: Self-assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self-assessment: Groupwork

1. I shared in my group today.

2. I encouraged others in my group to share.

3. I listened to others.

4. Others talked with me.

5. I felt supported by people in my group.

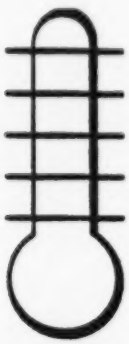
6. We worked on the task cooperatively.

Appendix N
Rate Your Feelings

Name: _____ Date: _____

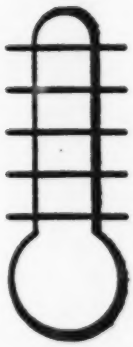
How are you feeling?

How are you feeling about school?



very happy
glad
half happy/sad
sad
very unhappy

How are you feeling about friends?



very happy
glad
half happy/sad
sad
very unhappy

How are you feeling about family?

very happy
glad
half happy/sad
sad
very unhappy

Color the thermometer up to the line which best shows how you are feeling!